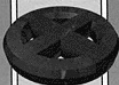


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X-MEN

OCT '96 102

EXCALIBUR



DIRECT EDITION



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AFTER THE BOMB

a STAN LEE presentation

SATELLITE TELEVISION
AT THE MUIR ISLAND
MEDICAL RESEARCH
STATION, OFF SCOTLAND'S
NORTH COAST.

... WE REPORT,
FOLLOWING THE
HORRIFIC EVENTS IN
NEW YORK, THE FOLLOWING
SUPERHUMANS ARE
MISSING, PRESUMED
DEAD.

THE
FANTASTIC FOUR,
CAPTAIN AMERICA, IRON
MAN, THOR AND OTHER
MEMBERS OF THE AVENGERS
ALSO APPEAR TO BE
MISSING AT THIS
STAGE...

... IT
SHOULD
BE NOTED THAT
THE MEMBERSHIP OF
THE X-MEN APPEARS
TO HAVE BEEN
UNTOUCHED
BY --

WARREN ELLIS / CASEY JONES / ROB WAINES / JASON MARTIN
SCOTT KOBELISH / AS & COMICRAFT / ARIANNE LENSUECK / MALIBU
GARDNER EIDELSON with JONATHAN SUGARMAN / WARRAS PRODUCTION

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...LEADING
TO AN
INTENSIFICATION
OF ANTI-MUTANT
FEELING ON THE
STREETS OF AMERICA. WE
ASK, WHY DID THE X-MEN
SURVIVE WHEN OUR
GREATEST HEROES
DIDN'T?

I
DON'T BELIEVE
THEY'RE GONE,
MOIRA.

NOT
THEM. IT'S
LIKE... I DIDN'T
BELIEVE THEY *COULD*
DIE. THEY SEEMED
BIGGER THAN
THAT.

YOU
SEE WHY
I WANTED TO
KEEP YE OUT
OF IT NOW,
KURT?

WITH
THOSE HEROES
GONE, THOSE PEOPLE
WHO WALKED THE
GLOBE TO HELP
PEOPLE...

... WELL,
YOU AND YOUR
EXCALIBUR ARE
ALL THE REST OF THE
WORLD HAS GOT
NOW.

ON SHORE AND INLAND A LITTLE;
THE FAVORITE MAINLAND
HAUNT OF EXCALIBUR'S PETE
WISDOM AND KITTY PRYDE.

The Chalk
& Cheese

HERE, LISTEN TO THIS:
"QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ASKED
ABOUT THE MUTANT ORGANIZATION
EXCALIBUR, BELIEVED TO BE
BASED IN SCOTLAND AT THE
MOIRA MacTAGGERT
MEDICAL RESEARCH
FACILITY."

"THE PRIME MINISTER, IN AN
OFFICIAL STATEMENT, MADE IT
CLEAR THAT THE GOVERNMENT
CONSIDERS EXCALIBUR NO THREAT
TO SOCIETY, AND THAT THEIR
ACTS DURING THE LONDON
CRISIS WERE 'MOST
HELPFUL'."

MOST
HELPFUL? HE MAKES
IT SOUND LIKE WE LENT
A HAND WITH THE
DECORATING.

SEE THE NEWS
OUT

Oh, IT GETS BETTER.
"THE LABOUR LEADER PRAISED
EXCALIBUR'S DEDICATION AND
SELFLESSNESS, HAILING THEM AS AN
EXAMPLE OF THE 'COMPASSIONATE
SOCIETY' THAT A LABOUR
GOVERNMENT WOULD BUILD
FOLLOWING AN ELECTION
VICTORY."

GREAT.
WE'RE A POLITICAL
FOOTBALL.

"OTHER
STATEMENTS
CLEARLY DELINEATE
EXCALIBUR AS A CREATURE
FAR DIFFERENT FROM ITS
AMERICAN COUSINS."
Ah, BREAKFAST...



WIR ISLAND
STATION...

"WE FOUGHT
TOGETHER ONCE,
YOU KNOW,
HE AND I."

"HE HAD A
PRESENCE
THAT ISN'T
EASY TO PUT
INTO WORDS."

"BUT WHENEVER
I HEAR THE WORDS
SUPER HERO, THAT
HAVE BEEN USED AND
OVERUSED UNTIL
THEY SEEM TO HAVE
NO MEANING
ANYMORE --

"-- I THINK
OF CAPTAIN
AMERICA."

AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
LOVED HIM. MEGGAN, IN A WAY
I COULD NEVER UNDERSTAND.
IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS CAPTAIN
WHEN I WAS CAPTAIN
BRITAIN.

DOES THAT
BOTHER YOU,
BRIAN?



OUTSIDE AND ABOVE THE MUIR ISLAND HANGAR, THERE IS THE NOISE OF NEW GAMES BEING PLAYED BETWEEN EXCALIBUR AND THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

MOIRA McTAGGERT HAS AGREED TO ALSTAIR STUART'S NEW OFFICIAL PARANORMAL INVESTIGATION MINISTRY, THE DEPARTMENT, TAKING ON RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MUTANT CRIMINALS INCARCERATED AT MUIR.

I'M
SPOOR!
I'M THE
MOST TERRIFYING
CREATURE YE'LL
EVER SEE.

YE
CAN'T
JIS' WAIVE ME
AROUND LIKE
A SHOPPIN'
BAG!

YE
BAMPOTS!

I'M
GOING
TO MISS
HIM.

ONE LESS
HEADACHE,
ONE LESS
DISTRACTION...

FOR
WHOP?

ONE MORE HEADACHE, ONE MORE DISTRACTION, THE GERMAN COUNTRYSIDE.

AMANDA SEFTON'S TELEPORT EFFECT FADES INTO THE GLADE, BUBBLES OF LIGHT DRIFTING PAST COLOSSUS AND RAHNE SINCLAIR...

...JUST BECAUSE MARGALI SZARDOS VANISHED AFTER WE SEPARATED HER FROM THE BEAST BENEATH LONDON, THAT SURELY DOESN'T MEAN SHE RETURNED HOME.

WE CAN'T FIND HER ANYWHERE ELSE.

RAHNE, HOLD BACK WHILE I SCAN HER CARAVAN.

SHE MAY BE INJURED, WHICH WILL MAKE HER ALL THE MORE DANGEROUS.





CRUNCH













FAIR
ENOUGH,
I'LL JUST STOP AND
WATCH IF THAT'S ALL
RIGHT WITH
YOU.

SURE.

THESE
GUYS AREN'T
MUCH OF A --

Yeah --
WORKOUT,
BUT I'LL
DO.

I
SUSPECT,
THOUGH, THAT
YOU JUST LIKE
WATCHING
ME GET
SWEATY.

WHICH
IS FINE...



... BUT A BIT
OF APPLAUSE AND
GENERAL WORSHIPING
COULDN'T HURT,
TOO.



IS, AH... IS
EVERYTHING
OKAY OUT
HERE?



KITTY'S
GOT IT ALL UNDER
CONTROL, ANNIE.



YOU'RE
A BAD INFLUENCE
ON ME, WISDOM. IF
ANYONE ASKS,
THEN YOU MADE
ME DO IT.

NOW --
WHAT'S
THE STORY
HERE?

I'M WITH
THE AMERICAN
GOVERNMENT, PRYDE.
I'M FROM INTERESTS INSIDE
THE WHITE HOUSE --
FOR GOD'S SAKE
YOU HIT ME --

WE
WERE SENT
TO TELL YOU --
THE ENGLISH MIGHT
LOVE EXCALIBUR, FOR
THE MOMENT -- BUT
YOU ARE NOT
WELCOME IN
AMERICA.

SOON,
THE BRITISH WILL
BE CONVINCED TO
NOT LOVE YOU TOO. I'M
HERE TO SAY: YOU'RE
ON BORROWED
TIME.



LAST TIME I LOOKED,
I HELD AMERICAN
CITIZENSHIP,
BLIB.

BUBP

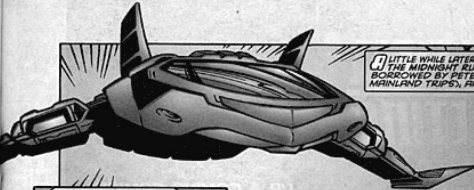
WHERE
DO YOU GET
OFF THREATENING
AMERICAN CITIZENS
ABROAD?

YOU'RE A MUTANT,
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK
YOU COUNT --?

OKAY,
WE GOT YOUR
MESSAGE. GET
READY FOR
OURS.



OWWWW



A LITTLE WHILE LATER, EXCALIBUR'S PLANE, THE MIDNIGHT RUNNER (FREQUENTLY BORROWED BY PETE AND KITTY FOR MAINLAND TRIPS), ARRIVES AT MUIR...



OKAY, THAT'S ELEVEN MUTANTS AIRLIFTED OUT, DOCTOR M&C TAGGERT. IF YOU CAN JUST SIGN OFF ON THE ROLL CALL FOR ME...



HERE'S THE ONE WE WERE MISSING FROM THE HOLDING CELLS, DR. M&C TAGGERT.



Och, HIM, THE... UH... THE CRIMSON GOATGOUGER, AN OBSCURE SUPER-VILLAIN FROM, UH, ABERYSTWYTH.

VERY SLIPPERY CUSTOMER, LIKE TWO OTHER FOLKS I COULD MENTION...

IS THIS ONE ON THE LIST I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU'D LOST ONE.

IT'S VITAL YOU KEEP HIS MOUTH COVERED. HE CAN CONTROL YOUR MIND BY VOICE. IF YOU REMOVE THE GAG, YOU'RE DOOMED. DON'T WORRY, HE BREATHES THROUGH HIS FINGERS.

THE YANKS HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THIS ONE. ALSTAIR MIGHT WANT THE UM, GORTGOUGER SENT TO THEM. GIVE HIM THIS NOTE, IT EXPLAINS EVERYTHING...

FINE, RIGHT THEN, SONNY JIM, LET'S GET YOU CAGED UP AND AWAY...

RIGHT THEY'RE GONE.

SO LET'S HAVE AN EXPLANATION OUT O' YOU TWO, OR D'YE WANT YOUR SLAPPING NOW?



LATER...

...AND THE NOTE PETE WROTE INSTRUCTED ALISTAIR TO POST THE GUY BACK TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN A BOX.

WE DON'T THINK THIS WAS AN OFFICIAL WARNING, BUT, STILL, I THINK WE ANSWERED IT WELL ENOUGH.

YOU STILL LOOK PRETTY MISERABLE, MOIRA. WHAT'S UP?

Och, IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE HAD THE THINK ON ME FEET LIKE THAT, KITTY PRYDE.

PRRR

I HAD A PHONE CALL FROM FRIENDS IN THE UNITED STATES EARLIER.





OKAY, THE
BOMB'S DROPPED.
LIFE GOES ON. NO AMOUNT
OF SULKING OR WORRYING
CHANGES THAT. WE'VE
GOT OUR OWN LIVES
TO LIVE.

IN THAT
REGARD, IN FIVE
MINUTES TIME, I AM
USING THE AUTOPILOT ON
THE MIDNIGHT RUNNER
AND TAKING IT DOWN
THE PUB.

IF
I GO ON
MY OWN, I
GO ON MY
OWN.

WELL.



WAIT UP,
YOU HORRIBLE
ENGLISH
GIT.

WHILE
I'M AROUND,
YOU DON'T HAVE TO
GO ANYWHERE ON
YOUR OWN.

AND, ONE BY ONE,
THE OTHERS FOLLOW.

AND, ONE BY ONE,
THEY BEGIN TO SMILE.

SUBSTANCES

Hola, folks! Beginning this issue, I'll be editing EXCALIBUR, taking the reins from Suzanne Gaffney (who's departed to help bring Marvel Comics on America Online to life), and Jaye Gardner, who, along with his manly assistant, Dan Hosek, handled this book while Suzanne was off getting married. Since space is limited, I'll keep this to the minimum. Big changes are in store for both the creative team and the characters that inhabit this book. I'll keep you all abreast of the changes as they're occurring!

Also, I just wanted to make mention of Rob Haynes who did the breakdowns (or if you prefer, storytelling) for last issue before Casey Jones moved in and did the finished artwork. Thanks, Mr. Haynes!

Finally, keep those volumes of mail coming! The more feedback I can get from the readers, the better this book will turn out each month. Thanks!

— Matt Idelson



Dear Swordstrokes,

Non-stop action sums up everything that was EXCALIBUR #98, and I feel the entire creative team responsible for its production deserves a big round of applause for having engineered such an excellent issue (as I am unable to do so in person, please pass on my applause to Mr. Ellis and company). It's not often that I feel compelled to write to any of the several comic book titles which I read, but issue #98 was done in the style of a great "old-fashioned barnstormer" and I had to let you know how much I appreciated it.

Kurt's changed demeanor from that of his usual benevolence to that of vengeful fury, due to Douglock's abduction by Black Air, was very plausible and it served as a great catalyst to spur the team into a no-holds-barred annihilation of Black Air Acquisition Station. It was refreshing to see the team work together so effectively and watch Kurt's plan come off without a hitch (except of course, for the fact that Douglock was not at the station to be retrieved). Oh well! Minor detail. I'm hoping they move right on to Black Air Headquarters in London and continue their rampage as they try to locate Douglock.

I enjoy the balance of characters and how they interact together. EXCALIBUR's characters are very real because they are multi-dimensional. EXCALIBUR readers are constantly allowed the opportunity to see each character in a different light as he or she changes, grows, and deals with being a mutant or simply a human being. This "realness" amongst characters is an

admirable quality in EXCALIBUR, and one that allows readers like me to feel as though they know and understand characters far more intimately than books which offer shallow, generic, one-dimensional "heroes". Boring! By the way — Amanda Sefton is a fascinating character who has lurked in the shadows of X-Men titles for years. She has a lot of potential to develop into a strong role in the pages of EXCALIBUR, and I hope you plan to cultivate this potential. What do you have in store for Amanda?

I'm 26 and I've been reading X-Men titles since I was nine. The X-Men are still great, but sometimes the plot being spread out amongst so many different titles while slowly unfolding over months (or years) diminishes plot continuity and the spontaneity so crucial for holding the reader's level of excitement. EXCALIBUR has become my favorite title, in part because the plot unfolds largely within its own pages and the continuity is fantastic. Great art, great colors... and amazing writing. Thank you for a book that, I feel, stands above the rest. Keep it up!

Sean Williamson
5820 S. Eleven Mile
Freeland, MI 48623

Thanks, Sean! We'll be striving to tell even better EXCALIBUR stories each and every month!

Keeping the character in comics is the goal of every creative team, and this one's no exception! Even following their imminent departure (see the next issue box), character focus will remain a main priority of this book, so don't worry about that. As for the mysterious and lovely Amanda, all we can say is... keep reading! (Boy, don't you just hate when we do that?)

Dear Swordstrokes,

About EXCALIBUR #98: Outstanding. This issue was easily the most exciting, action-packed, stressful, worth-waiting-for issue since the team's creation.

Warren seems to have made this book an X-title. Even more, EXCALIBUR has quickly become my favorite of the X-titles. His plot lines and ability to throw in character growth and interaction are superb. I feel he does have some characters he needs to get to know a little better, though. Or at least make the change a little more subtle.

Nightcrawler's new look has been a long time coming. The quintessential X-Man of the 90's. Finally, he has an "X" on his costume. It fits in nicely with the updated versions of Piotr, Meggan, and Kitty's costumes.

Speaking of Meggan, she's turning into quite a powerhouse (much like most of the X-women). And Wolfsbane seems to be getting along better here than she did in X-FACTOR.

Wisdom also seems to be starting to

enjoy this hero thing. Maybe he'll want a costume soon, too? I still hope the love triangle is not over, though. That tension is still apparent, and will juice up future storylines.

Colossus is being very quiet. I guess he's trying to assess his place on this team, letting everyone get comfortable with his presence. I would like to see him start dealing and coming to terms with many of the problems he's faced in the past months, though. We know he went to Avalon to avoid them, not face them, and if he doesn't face and talk about them, they'll fester inside of him and he'll go ballistic again.

I hope from what I read that Brian will soon rejoin the team as a member rather than a supporter. He's been through too much to simply sit on the sidelines now. Besides, inactivity, even with the Hellfire Club, seems to be returning him to the bottle.

Also, I can't wait to see where the current developments with Lockheed, Rory, Moira, and Douglock are going to take us. Hopefully on a wild, nail-biting ride.

Finally, an early congratulations on 100 issues. In a business where new books aren't even allowed to exist for more than six issues, that's quite an accomplishment. And trust me, I'll be around for the next 100.

Matt Bib
174 Edge Avenue
New Castle, DE 19720

Pete Wisdom in a costume, Matt? Not bloody likely! He is growing more comfortable with the team and his role on it, as evidenced by the PRYDE & WISDOM limited series currently on sale. It's by our very own Warren Ellis with art by Terry (STORM limited series) Dodson, and it's terrific. The first issue is on sale right now, so please check it out!

As for Colossus, he has indeed been through a great deal as of late. Stay tuned for more info on everyone's favorite metal man next month, same page!

next month:
STRANGE LOCALS!
SURPRISING GUEST
STARS!! AND
A FINAL FAREWELL
(-Sniff Sniff-)
FROM WARREN ELLIS &
CARLOS PACHECO!!!
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